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The Role of Opportunism

"At the present time, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists within the labor movement are co-operating in this work of adulterating Marxism. They omit, obliterate, and distort the revolutionary side of its teaching, its revolutionary soul."

Lenin - "State and Revolution"

The need for a Revolutionary Marxist party is paramount. It is the only party for the working class.

It is the instrument by which the vanguard of the working class must and will unite all the oppressed elements of capitalist society against the capitalist state and its opportunist supporters.

The Revolutionary Marxist party will not be blinded by the Stalinist, Socialist, and Trotskyite attempt to pass off state capitalist measures and systems as Socialist. This is especially true of Russia where the Stalinists, Trotskyists, Revolutionary Workers' League attempt to utilize the workers conviction of the proletarian character of the Russian revolution in order to get them to accept the idea that what exists now in Russia is some sort of workers' state.

The second Imperialist War has developed even more than the first World War the transition from monopoly capitalism to state capitalism. The exploitation of the working masses by the capitalist trusts and cartels which become more and more integrated with their state, the capitalist state, is increased at an accelerated pace.

The monstrous horrors and miseries of the 2nd Imperialist War arouse the indignation and resentment of the masses of the whole world. International proletarian revolution is casting its red shadow over the decaying body of world capitalism. The need for a revolutionary marxist party assumes ever more practical importance.

Opportunism has grown to forbidding proportions. It acquires all the colors of the rainbow in a national state that has experienced a comparatively long period of relative internal class "peace."

The United States has spawned within its confines a rich variety of opportunists currents. They differ in their labels and their verbiage and compete against each other for power and influence in the trade unions and in the U.S. government apparatus, but they are united in their ultimate aims. That is to continue as a parasitic growth on the backs of the working class and weld it to the trunk of the capitalist state. This is the process, under the guise of pro-"labor" and "liberal" programs, which coordinates the trade unions with the capitalist state, thus enabling the "democratic" victors in the 2nd Imperialist war to carry out the economics of fascism, step by step (state capitalism). Fascism, internationally is ascending in the dress of "anti-fascism."

For generations the pseudo-marxists and their derivatives have spread the fiction that nationalization, by a capitalist state means the end of the exploitation of the workers. Result - The workers have the illusion this is their state, and if the public power of the state is used for their interests, socialism or some form thereof will arrive through a painless process.

This is the tragedy of our epoch.

In that the working class which was under the illusion, it went to war to stamp out fascism, in reality to create a larger world market for American Imperialism, is duped into supporting the economic measures of Fascism after the pyrrhic victory over the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis.

The state is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The capitalist state is the rule of the capitalist class. It is not an impartial public arbiter. Its measures of nationalization, or as in the United States, government intervention and control is not for the purpose of freeing the workers

from wage slavery, but to save capitalism from bankruptcy.

The Taft-Hartley Act was the first major act of repression against the working class after World War II. It is a continuation of the wartime repression (the no-strike pledge, etc.) The working class is resentful. The C.I.O. and A.F.L. leaders rejected the line of a general strike against the act because it would have become a political strike against the U.S. capitalist government. They were scared. The leadership of the C.I.O. and A.F.L. is intimately connected with the U.S. capitalist government.

The Political Action Committee of the C.I.O. and the Labor Political and Educational League of the A.F.L. serve to direct the resentment of the workers into pro-capitalist channels. Through this method the two-party system of capitalist rule, Republican and Democrat is safeguarded.

Pro-"labor" anti-Taft-Hartley candidates for city, state and national offices from the Democratic and Republican parties of capitalism are openly presented to the workers for their support. Their auxiliary program is to fight inflation through deflation; i.e. price control, food rationing, and government control of profits, as well as support for the Marshall plan.

The P.A.C. and Labor's Political and Educational League aim to make capitalism more digestible to the workers. The trade unions under this leadership are not free trade unions but a labor front for developing State Capitalism. Free enterprise and free trade unions do not exist. The money the workers contribute to the P.A.C. and Labor's Political Educational League contribute to their own ruination.

Opportunism in the United States, in a sense, fortunately for the revolutionary marxists, is not united. It is very much divided. This division presents a splendid opportunity to the Marxists. It should make it easier to expose opportunism for what it is, and to build a revolutionary Marxist party in opposition to these bankrupt tendencies. True, they unite against Marxists. But they are too narrow and mean in their own perspectives to be effective if the Marxists take advantage of the situation.

For instance. In New York City and State there are two labor parties. Both have the same program for the American workers as the P.A.C. and Labor's Political Educational League. Neither participates in the class struggle. They differ on Russia and the Marshall Plan. These two labor parties are respectively the American Labor Party, a purely petty-bourgeois parliamentary arrangement dominated by the Stalinists in a tenuous bloc with the leaders of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union, which will split on the Wallace 3rd party issue. The Liberal Party, is dominated by the Social Democrats in an alliance with Dubinsky of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and some anti-stalinist New Dealers. Their program is the same as the P.A.C. and L.P.E.L. of the A.F.L. a program to patch up capitalism.

Nationally, there exists the Americans for Democratic Action and the Progressive Citizens of America. Their U.S. programs are the same as the C.I.O., P.A.C. and the A.F.L., L.P.E.L. The A.D.A. is anti-communist, and the P.C.A. is pro-stalinist.

The failure of the last conference of foreign ministers in London to come to agreement with Molotov on a unified German capitalist state and a German peace treaty was the signal for the Stalinist Progressive Citizens of America to launch a 3rd party movement under the leadership of Henry Wallace with a program for patching up American capitalism and for a U.S. foreign policy friendly to Russian Imperialism.

Last but not least in the American zoo of political opportunism we have the Trotskyist "Workers" Party of Shachtman and the Trotskyist "Socialist Workers" Party of Cannon. Both advocate a program of "Transitional Demands" that puts to shame the reforms of capitalism, proposed by the Stalinist and Socialist parties.

Shactman's party is opposed to defending Russian Imperialism and Cannon's party defends Russian Imperialism, calling it a "Workers's State". Both agree on the rest of their Transitional program. They propose reforms for patching up capitalism that they parade as something quite new. However, unfortunately for them the stinking opportunists of the Socialist and Stalinist parties advocated such a bankrupt program long ago. The proposal by the Trotskyists to build a labor party, nationalize the banks, railroads, industry and agriculture, build cooperatives is nothing but a program to reform capitalism.

The Labor Party organized on a national scale is the most finished form of opportunism. It represents the most consistent program of reformism and at times, stalinism.

Labor Parties have come into existence when the class consciousness of the workers reaches a level that breaks through the framework of the open capitalist parties. The labor party reflecting the workers resentment against the capitalist governments' anti-workingclass policies, turns the worker from revolution to reform.

The threat of revolution and the need to preserve capitalism are the basic factors in the rise to the position of ruling party by a Labor Party.

The labor party leaders, socialist in words, defenders of the capitalist state in deeds, are base, servile tools of their own national bourgeoisie. Before being put at the head of the capitalist state they demagogically advocate socialism through constitutional methods only to be the most consistent exponents of state capitalism in office.

The role of the Labor Party is to enable the capitalist state to, in short, increase the rate of exploitation, and limit the democratic rights of the workers. It is assigned the role of carrying out imperialist policy in the colonies and semi-colonies. The efficiency in carrying through capitalist stabilization is increased by centralizing the economy thru nationalizing banking, railroads, industry and agriculture. This it does at a time when the capitalist economy disintegrates, when the conservative and liberal parties of capitalism have lost the confidence of the workers - (England-Bevin-Attlee, Franco-Gouin, Ramadier, Blum etc.)

The central point of their program is to defend bourgeois democracy against the revolutionary threat of the working class and open the gates wide to totalitarianism (State capitalism) on the right.

The Trotskyites of the Cannon and Shactman parties by advocating a labor party for the U.S., defend bourgeois democracy, against proletarian revolution and support a program of capitalist retrenchment against the working class.

The working class as it becomes conscious of itself as a class instinctively turns to thoughts of revolution, not reform. The deceivers at the head of the C.I.O. political action committee; the A.F.L. Labors' Political and Educational League; the American Labor Party; the Liberal Party; the Americans for Democratic action, the Progressive Citizens of America, the left supporters of a Labor Party; the Trotskyites, the Social Democrats and Stalinists poison the minds of the workers.

The organization of a revolutionary marxist party provides the only answer to the opportunist currents that seek to stabilize and continue capitalism; that seek only to change from private capitalism to state capitalism (Social-Democrats, Stalinists, Trotskyites, Revolutionary Workers' League, C.I.O., A.F.L. Wallace's P.C.A., American labor party, Liberal party et al).

The revolutionary party, Marxist in character will break the proletariat from the capitalist state and its opportunist supporters.

It must under all conditions retain its organizational and political independence.

The international character of the proletarian revolution creates the need for an International of Revolutionary Marxism opposed to the Socialist,

Stalinist, Trotskyist Internationals of betrayal.

The aim of the revolutionary parties of the Marxist International is one:— The overthrow of capitalism accomplished, in a revolutionary manner, must bring to power the proletariat, organized as a class, wielding that power through the creation of its own state machinery by breaking up the "democratic" or any other form of the capitalist dictatorship.

The state machinery of the working class is the proletarian dictatorship. It represents the highest form of the democratic expression of the masses.

Control by the masses of the democratization of the various branches of the proletarian state apparatus will abolish bureaucracy, officialdom, and bring nearer the point where the dictatorship of the proletariat withers away into the classless, socialist (communist) society.

Communism creates the conditions for the progressive development of culture and art. Slave democracy prevents the democratic participation by the masses in cultural expression. Only a privileged few are offered the opportunity in slave democracy.

Communist society alone, in which "the associated producers regulate their interchange with nature rationally, bring it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power," will create the material foundation for "the development of human power which is its own end, the true realm of freedom."

Marx - "Capital," Vol. III pp. 954 - 955.

THE MARSHALL PLAN AND IMPERIALIST WAR

From an article by Dayal in L'Internationaliste
of July, August, 1947

Organ of French Fraction of the Left
Communist International

Apparently American Imperialism gives proof of great indifference at this time to the proposal of the various European States to lend them money for reviving their national economies.

The big newspapers who always attach great importance to anybody at the head, praise the magnanimity of Truman; the insulating forces to whom he is tied and the genius of Wallace. But to get information very little beating of drums is done publicly about the real motive determining the American offer. Once more the economic forces in attendance fear to permit analysis and clear insight into the question.

In line with that which is to follow, the big newspapers notwithstanding, in order to designate American Imperialism we will say America; the same for Russia and the other countries; this in view of simplification.

AMERICA AND EUROPE

It is well to understand that America is ready to draw upon the considerable wealth from the products of her more developed industry.

This enormous production is to be drained away on merchandise for quick sales at first, in order to avoid economic crises and unemployment that always beset American industry, with all the reverberations of social upheavals which these times call for.

In these circumstances this policy of American loans is an excellent opportunity for the U.S. capitalists. The financial loans to France, for example, is from the American government. This money is lent on condition that it be spent for purchases of American merchandise. It is a very pretty situation. The American taxpayer giving the money to France; money which returns to the coffers of American capitalists. Under these conditions, one understands that the American government under command of the capitalists are not very hard to please under these conditions of repayment and that he looks to coming taxes from the poor of Europe who permit, suffer the reappearance of taxes in this degree.

There is more than one aspect to this sordid problem. It is always very possible that the economic plan of the U.S. really aims to restore European economy. Above all you have to consider this restoration should under their direction permit political interference. By these diverse methods, directly or indirectly, the character of European restoration may or may not be such as to give danger of serious competition to American capitalism. It is too early to say.

Here appears the political necessity that guides the American motives. Europe is in chaos; her economic interests in deep-going contradictions. Stable governments are chosen; are all temporary; are just a brake; fear social agitation, prepare to liquidate the workers parties and unions, in spite of the treachery of the workers parties and unions.

Under these conditions, it is urgent to give at least what is necessary for food and shelter for the millions of individuals. This is a question of the health of society for the capitalist world. The political unification of Europe is a Utopia that is not possible under the businessmen of Wall St. On the other hand there is realized a certain coordination inside the divided European economy under the American direction, dominated by American capital. Here is nice work of businessmen (here is their policy) to maintain division of sovereign states, and competitors, but in reality to lead in collecting the benefits of exploitation imposed on the people.

TOWARD THE THIRD WORLD WAR

Still the American Plan turns on the first question of the epoch, the rivalry between Russia and America.

We denounce this rivalry as purely economic, these two forces being forced by their antagonisms to fight to eliminate each other in order to be able to exploit the world without sharing it. Here we are dragged toward war, in the absence of a revolutionary movement capable of overthrowing the capitalist regime, there still exist sufficient pressure to retard the beginning of the conflict.

The pacifist appeal from Marshall wishes to come to aid a la Russia; at the same time that the other European nations are not able to elude being imposed on. Molotov is not being a dupe. Each one recruits influence amongst the rank and file in the relief of Europe. Marshall creates a state of good will in coming to the aid of the people of Europe and by that it seems as if he assures the peace. Russia through the national communist parties stigmatizes the reactionary character of American Imperialism which supports dictatorial governments such as Greece. America puts in evidence Russian totalitarian methods in Bulgaria, Hungary, Roumaina etc. ... Each one calls his adversary fascists. But these authoritarian methods are common to all imperialisms and form part of their political necessity.

Already war rages on the secondary fronts such as in Greece, China, and in part the colonial countries. These are the taking of positions, political and economic in view of the future world war.

CONFUSION COMES FORTH

The menace of war seems to disappear through the pacifistic declarations of the heads of governments as Marshall who "regretting sincerely" not to be able to help Russia through the medium of his plan, as Macadieu, declaring that "Russia is European and that it is wrong to remain isolated". The realities are again obscured by the fact that the Stalinist parties of Holland and Italy approve the Marshall Plan, this is for opportunistic reasons over the national plan. The English and French governments rebel, both publicizing the plan but against the rise of German economy.

Their reaction represents the Capitalists not tied to America; who serve their own unique private, political interests. That is to say the necessity not to destroy the old nationalist base which permitted them to drag down the working class in the preceding conflict.

In reality it is difficult to define who arrests and who accelerates events at this time:

- 1- The interests of diverse capitalist tendencies.
- 2- The lack of understanding and incapacity of the capitalist leaders.
- 3- The political manoeuvres tending to dupe the population and more

particularly the working class.

But above all, that which remains constant for all the discussions, meetings, pacts and alliances; the imperialist brigands are leading the capitalist world to war.

The brutal fact is seen to be clarified of all the noise which envelopes it, and be put in evidence to the proletariat who will be called again to support under various pretexts; maintain and reenforce capitalist exploitation.

The Struggle against War
by Revolutionary Defeatism
and Proletarian Internationalism

It is the duty of the advanced workers to break from and expose Russian

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Stalinism as a bastion of State Capitalism, based on the exploitation of man by man with the aims of Imperialist war comparable to those of American Imperialism.

It is a crucial fact, which it is the duty of the proletarian vanguard to accept and propagandize to the masses. This is indispensable in order to be able to call the proletariat in revolutionary action against the war and not to group under the flag of the defense of the U.S.S.R.

Those who, as the Trotzkyites in spite of different nuances as to subtle tactics, are still tied to the defense of Russia, refuse in fact to conduct revolutionary action against the war which is coming. They agree, on the contrary to drag along the proletariat to war to defend the most unbridled system of capitalist exploitation existing.

It is the duty of the proletarian in every country to affirm his will to revolutionary defeatism vis-a-vis the approaching conflict, whichever imperialist clan invites him to form brigades and not rally to the "defense of the U.S.S.R.," or to the defense of American democracy, or the occident.

The threat of the revolutionary defeatist proletariat, in order to be effective, must break from all the mistresses of confusion; from all the bourgeois national politicians; national stalinists or trotskyites.

It is the duty of the proletariat to reject the different choices and nuances between the different forms of capitalist imperialist rule in order to save humanity from Imperialist War; in order to live on the basis of the classless Socialist society.

The National and Colonial Question

Editorial Note:-- The comrade who wrote the following article is now dead. He was never connected with the "Internation Bulletin" or the Left Communist International. However, his polemic against Trotsky is a worthy contribution toward the Marxist understanding of the National and colonial question.

The Sino-Japanese War is past history. Russian Imperialism is expanding now through its puppet armies into China. The Marxist analysis applies to this phase of Chinese history; to Spain 1936-1939; and to all the colonial and semi-colonial areas of the world now rocked by social convulsions.

The bankruptcy of Trotskyism, (Cannon, Shactman), is thoroughly exposed. It also serves to reveal that the policy of "marching separately and striking together" of the Revolutionary Workers' League is nothing but a nuance of Trotskyism, and puts the proletariat under the orders of the Bourgeoisie, despite R.W.L. protestations to the contrary. The "Program of the Revolutionary Workers League" reveals that these people do not understand Imperialism at "home" or "abroad", nor have they broken from bourgeois democracy.

In part II of their "Program" in the section entitled "Colonial Wars" they have this to say, "With these instruments of dual power it may be necessary for a certain period to march separately from the colonial bourgeoisie but strike together against the Imperialist invader." In the advanced countries the R.W.L. is revolutionary defeatist but they are social patriots of the puppets of Imperialism in the colonial countries. Those who strike with the bourgeoisie strike against the proletarian revolution.

In part II, the paragraph entitled "March Separately and Strike Together" exposes the fact that the Revolutionary Workers' League defends bourgeois democracy against Fascism. They make a false distinction between "good" capitalists and "bad" capitalists; between democratic capitalists and reactionary capitalists. Through a circuitous route it, the R.W.L. arrives at the position of social-democracy, Stalinism and Trotskyism.

This is what the R.W.L. has to say, "Under this three cornered struggle. The proletariat must utilize the friction within the camp of the exploiters by using the strategy of marching separately from the democratic capitalists and

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striking together against the reactionaries."

Marxists fight against every form of the capitalist dictatorship democratic or fascist, thru revolutionary defeatism.

ANNOUNCEMENT

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IV THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTIONS.

The second world war has once more raised the national question to the forefront. The sharp thrusts of Hitler and Stalin against the half dozen or so small states of Europe have, on the one hand, intensified the feeling of "national" consciousness among the peoples of the small states as opposed to class consciousness, that is, internationalist consciousness; and, on the other hand, permitted the Anglo-French-American imperialists to appear as champions of nation liberation. (Don't laugh. Mussolini, too, also took up, belatedly, the cudgels for the right of self-determination for the Finns.) It goes without saying that anyone who is in the least acquainted with the game of international power politics was hardly impressed at all by the recent outpourings of sympathy by the democratic gentry for the small states. The class conscious worker can never forget the past and present oppression of the colonial people by this gang of parasites which parades under the cloak of "democracy".

What concerns us at present, however, are not the lofty, humane principles of the democratic statesmen which must be exposed. The importance of exposing the "noble" war aims of the Allied imperialists is from the standpoint of the Marxist living in the so-called democratic country his chief aim at the present period. There remains, however, another task, equally important, namely, an analysis of the problems and tasks of the proletariat in the small and colonial states. Without taking cognizance of these latter questions the proletariat of the advanced countries, Lenin has said, cannot hope to overthrow their own bourgeoisie, much less build a socialist society.

What position ought the class conscious worker adopt in regard to the revolt of the Irish Nationalists against Great Britain? In regard to the nationalist movement struggling for independence in India? In regard to the Mexican bourgeois state fighting to free itself from Yankee domination? In the past it has been axiomatic in "Marxist" circles to declare for the support of the oppressed country against the oppressor country and let it go at that. Such a view automatically took the subject off the class plane and rendered a class position impossible as the reason for the support or non-support of any country's war was based on the petty bourgeois, liberal criterion of aiding the weak in the struggle against the strong. Starting from this false premise the expression "fighting a just war" was used to describe a weak country resisting imperialist aggression. In unjust war became in the parlance of old time Marxists a war pursued for economic aggrandizement, for the conquest of territory in search for markets. Thus, the war on the part of China, more precisely, on the part of the Chinese bourgeoisie against Japanese capitalism was described as a "just" war, the reasoning being that China was not fighting for territorial aggrandizement or imperialist purposes as the Japanese were. The principle of the "right to self-determination" is thus given an absolute standing, divorced from the class struggle.

Trotsky brought out this petty bourgeois position in an unmistakably patriotic manner. In a polemic directed against a group in Mexico Trotsky snarled at those who refuse to become supporters of the murderous Chiang Kai Shek gang of exploiters. Reducing the question once again to the sentimentalist and liberal view of "aiding the weak in the struggle against the strong", he said:

"If Japan is an imperialist country and if China is the victim of imperialism, we favor China." (Internal Bulletin of Trotskyists, October, 1937, p. 53.)

.. liberal could not have put it any better. Ever since the rise of the forces which seek to upset the status quo, we have heard nothing else from the bourgeois-democratic press except their blasts of support for those countries which became "victims of imperialist aggression". And how does this gutter press propagandize the workers into supporting a Rydz-Smigly dictator of Poland, a

Mannerheim of Finland, a Chiang Kai Shek of China? Like Trotsky, the paid propagandists of the gutter press reduce the question to the single point which "strikes best at the workers' heart": this small, weak country is a victim of imperialist aggression; rally to its support.

The bourgeois and their "labor" lackeys can afford to put the question thus. In fact, no imperialist war has ever witnessed a failure on the part of some nations to raise the cry that they were defending themselves from imperialist attack. Witness Hitler's declaration to the effect that British are fighting a war to retain the enslavement of their colonial empire while he, Hitler, in turn is fighting a national liberationist war to free the German people from British imperialism. Witness on the other hand the British-French declaration that they are fighting to reestablish the national independence of the Poles, Czechs, Austrians, Finns, etc. which they had helped to destroy. And as a matter of fact, one of the aims of the democratic imperialists is undoubtedly to reestablish the independence of these small nations. For it is clear that the breakup of Europe into small, independent states is a guarantee which the American, British and French imperialists have against a German threat. History has forced upon Germany and Russia the role of a victor of small states in Europe and upon England and America that of the champion of the small states. For a Marxist to declare himself a supporter of a country made victim of imperialist aggression is impermissible in principle as this is precisely the game practiced by the murderous bloc of imperialists masquerading as democrats. It will be replied by those who raise the slogan of self-determination for Czechs, Poles, Finns, etc. that they are sincerely aiming to give these oppressed people independence, free from any imperialist domination or subservience whatsoever. This, of course, is to take place under capitalism.

Aside from the impossibility of any small nation's freedom and independence for any length of time from the imperialist whirlpools, what, may we ask, is there to be gained by the proletariat if the impossible is really accomplished? The reply will be that the independence of the colonies and oppressed states will be a blow to imperialism, thus facilitating the proletarian revolution. Trotsky, in attempting to tag a proletarian label onto his petty bourgeois position, argued this way when he said:

"The victory of China will signify, on the contrary, the social revolution in Japan and the free development, that is to say, unhindered by external oppression, of the class struggle in China."

Let us see. Just how would the victory of China have signified the proletarian revolution in Japan? By a victory of China, Trotsky obviously meant a victory of Bourgeois China, for in the very same article he says,

"In participating in the military struggle under the orders of Chiang Kai Shek... to prepare politically the overthrow of Chiang Kai Shek... that is the only revolutionary policy."

(my emphasis)

The proletarian revolution will come about in Japan, argues Trotsky, by showing an example to the Japanese proletariat of how well the Chinese workers can fight under the command of Chinese capitalist officers. Verily so. Similarly do the British imperialists ignite the liberationist flames among the Czechs and Poles by showing them how well they enslave the Indian and African masses.

The thing these pseudo-Marxists have in mind when they speak about a Chinese victory bringing about a proletarian revolution in Japan is, namely, that the defeat of the Japanese military will create such economic and political chaos at home as to make a proletarian revolution inevitable. It is undeniably true that a defeat of Japan might very well have unleashed the forces of revolt among the Japanese workers and peasants who gained nothing but death and disappointment from the Chinese venture. But so, too, might a defeat of Great

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Britain at the hands of Germany have stirred up revolutionary ferment among the British workers. Is that any reason for wishing the victory of Germany? Only a political idiot or a mere traitor to the interests of the proletariat, will "seek" to bring about proletarian revolution by working for the defeat of one capitalist state at the hands of another capitalist state. The German Social-Democrats in the World War of 1914 never brought about a proletarian revolution in Russia by helping the Kaiser's government defeat the Czar. Only the Bolsheviks, by holding firmly to their internationalist line of defeatism for both sides, were able to lead the Russian workers to the overthrow of capitalism.

We come to the second part of the pseudo-revolutionary argument:

"The victory of China will signify.. the free development.. of the class struggle in China."

Trotsky was one who chided others for not absorbing the bitter lessons of history. ("Those incurable ultra-lefts who never learn.") The bitter lessons of history teach us that a free Poland, a free Finland, free Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia took up arms against the Bolsheviks during 1917-1921. Far from acting as a spur to proletarian class action, the coming into existence of free, independent capitalist little states in Europe after the World War tended to create a wave of nationalism that played havoc with the proletarian movements of these formerly oppressed countries. The same could be said of post-war Czecho-Slovakia. The emergence of an independent Czecho-Slovak state did not and could not "signify the free development... of the class struggle" in Czecho-Slovakia. Quite the contrary. Having obtained the support of the population for a fight to establish an independent Czech state, the hitherto "oppressed" bourgeoisie proceeded to utilize this national unity first to suppress the proletariat and then to set out on its own imperialistic adventures, i.e., the taking over by the new Czech state of non-Czech territories such as Carpatho-Ukraine, Polish speaking districts and large German areas.

Trotsky and those who put forth the defense of small nations and colonial states confuse here two distinct and separate historical periods in the development of the national state. There was a time when one could truly speak of the emergence of the national state as signifying "the free development of the class struggle". But that was not in the year of Our Lord 1940. Marx and Lenin, who followed him, explained without any Trotskyist evasiveness what they had in mind when they supported the struggle for self determination of oppressed countries. A typical quotation from Lenin will illustrate what is meant.

"Socialism will be achieved by the united action of the proletarians, not of all countries, but of a minority of countries, namely, of the countries that have reached the stage of development of advanced capitalism. P. Kievsky's failure to understand this point is the cause of his error. In those advanced countries (England, France, Germany, etc.) the national problem has been solved for a long time; national unity has long outlived its purpose; objectively, there are no 'national tasks' to be fulfilled. Hence, only in those countries is it possible now to 'blow up' national unity, and establish class unity.

"In the undeveloped countries, which we singled out (in section 6 of our theses) in paragraphs 2 and 3, namely, in the whole of Eastern Europe and all the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the situation is entirely different. In these countries as a general rule, we still have oppressed and capitalistically undeveloped nations. Objectively, these nations still have national tasks to fulfill, namely democratic tasks, the tasks of throwing off foreign oppression."

---Lenin, Selected Works, Vol V., p. 295.

Here Lenin seizes the bull by the horns and explains without any liberal sentimentalism the reason for his support of national wars of liberation.

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The creation of the nation and its separation from imperialist domination will allow for the development of capitalist relationships which will act as necessary pre-requisites for the ushering in of the proletarian revolution in backward countries. That is how Lenin put the question. He was wrong but his error was of a different nature from that of Trotsky. Lenin erred in thinking that the proletariat of such states as the Balkans, Russia and Poland, as well as other backward countries, could not conceivably seize power without allowing first for the full development of commodity-production; capitalism. The creation of the national state was going to free the productive forces from the fetters of feudalism, allow for the creation of a sizeable proletariat and thus permit the "free development of the class struggle." The phrase, "free development of the class struggle" was interpreted thus and in no other way. What do the Troyskys & Co., who support Chiang Kai Shek mean when they say that the victory of this butcher of the Chinese Revolution in 1927 will signify the "free development of the class struggle" in China? Is it that Trotsky & Co. preclude the seizure of power by the Chinese proletariat at the present stage of Chinese economic development? Trotsky would have had to answer "No" for his whole theory of the "permanent revolution" argues that, quite to the contrary, the proletarian revolution alone can solve the democratic tasks of the backward states; that is to say, that the proletariat of these backward countries do not at all have to go through a further stage, or, if you please, a higher stage of capitalist development before they could seize power. Consequently, we demand to know from those who declare for the victory of China: What has the proletariat of China to gain from serving in the armies of Chiang Kai Shek aside from the empty phrase about the "free development of the class struggle". To cry that the "independence of China is at stake" as do the Stalinists, liberals, Socialists, Troyskyites et al., is to repeat the vulgar justifications of the imperialist bourgeoisie when they go to war; the defence of the country is at stake. Actually, what is involved is not the question of the independence of China or this or that state. What is at stake is the independence of the Chinese proletariat, its independence from the native Chinese bourgeoisie. The shameful approach of liberalism to the fate of Chinese independence, coupled with the pseudo-radical Trotskyist worry about the transformation of China from a semi-colony to a colony, muddles the waters and stirs up national instead of class unity.

Who are the people who facilitate the victory of Chiang Kai Shek?

Let us see:

- 1) First, there are the Stalinist scoundrels who have just demonstrated by their patriotic war just how they champion self-determination, in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria.
- 2) Secondly, there is the gang of democratic statesmen who for years have plundered China and who, aside from giving verbal sympathy which is used to propagandize the masses, have dumped millions of dollars to enable the Chinese regime to resist the invasion.
- 3) And, lastly, there are the supporters from the "left," who support the devil behind you; not in the name of Stalin, but in the name of the proletariat.

What chief reason do the bourgeois democrats and the "left" supporters give unison, all cry out: "The independence of China is at stake." We could very well understand how the support of Chiang Kai Shek coincided with the interests of Japan's imperialist rivals. Trotsky, however, declared that the fight for the independence of China under the command of bourgeois officers coincides also with the interests of the Chinese proletariat. It is this which concerns us at the moment.

The ex-leader of the Russian revolution was not able to defend himself. Others who hold his position come to his defense with deeper arguments. These people made the discovery that when the Chinese workers fought against Japanese

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imperialism under the command of Chiang Kai Shek's armies they were really, as amazing as it may sound, fighting their own native bosses. Let us examine this mysterious position.

The argument goes this way: The imperialists are the major masters of the Chinese economy. The native bourgeoisie is only striving to achieve the dominant exploiting position. This being the case, the Chinese worker, when participating in the "colonial" war is but fighting a class war against his present main exploiter, the foreign imperialist.

'Twere good if 'twere true, but unfortunately, this is not the case. Unlike "mathematicians" who conclude that the main enemy is the foreign imperialist because they control 51% of Chinese industry while the native capitalists control 49%, Marxists also pry into other factors of Chinese life. We ask: Who is it that maintains the suppression of the proletariat politically and economically? Who is it that breaks their strikes and their demonstrations? Who is it that maintains "law and order" for the ruling classes, both foreign and native? If it is urged that the Chinese proletariat is now engaged in fighting a class war, where, in the name of truth, is this class war? Could it be that this class war is expressed in the fact that there are no workers' militias, no workers' councils, no workers' state?

The Chinese worker may be fighting against his chief exploiter all right but one would have to be blind not to see that all the "class" fighting he is doing is within the framework of the Nationalist Army under the orders of native capitalist officers. All the chatter and interpretations to the effect that the Chinese worker is pursuing the class war when he is fighting a "colonial" war will not change the situation which is clear for any one who has eyes to see and wants to see, namely, that at no time in the history of modern China was the Chinese proletariat more closely tied to the chariot of Chiang Kai Shek than in the present "colonial" war.

The concept of supporting the smaller capitalist against the main imperialist exploiter is nothing short of the old "lesser evil" policy, although it may be couched in the most revolutionary terms.

What is the favorite method used by the opportunists to induce the workers to accept the lesser evil policy? Always they show reaction to be the greater danger and they urge the proletariat to defeat this first before they tackle the smaller. They say that in fighting fascism, even under the banners of bourgeois democratic capitalism, the proletariat is really pursuing its own class war. That is the favorite trick by which the proletariat has been ensnared. The Spanish workers were also told that by fighting Franco within the Loyalist army they were fighting their own class war. History has made plain the fakery of such arguments. To urge that fighting against Japanese imperialism under native capitalist generals is the equivalent of the proletariat's fighting its own battles is to resurrect the theory of the "lesser evil" in the worst form imaginable.

When pressed to the wall and unable to reply to the critical revolutionists, the supporters of Chiang Kai Shek reply: But isn't it true that Marx and Lenin, who were the best of revolutionists, supported wars of national liberation? In passing it may be said that no argument is proven correct or incorrect by quoting an esteemed individual. A party that lives in the past is no living organism but a corpse. Too often have we heard comrades discard an opponent's arguments by declaring it to be non-Marxist or non-Leninist. Actually, it is first necessary to prove the point correct or incorrect and then the comparisons should be made.

We, of course, are Marxists and Leninists. Not that we share every comma of the works of Marx and Lenin. We hold to the basic revolutionary thought of these leaders of the working class. The reader will observe that our article on the national and colonial questions did not begin with a polemic against our opponents' revision of Marxism. Instead we preferred to be scientific about it;

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to show wherein the position of those modern supporters of "national wars" have served the interests of the bourgeoisie. Since, however, our opponents have attempted to link the names of Marx and Lenin to their treachery and betrayal, we shall take them up so as to prevent the great names of socialism from being besmirched by those vulgar falsifiers.

Marx arrived at his position on the national question by going into the origin of the national state. The national state as it exists today was correctly viewed by Marx as a product of capitalism. Capitalism utilized the existence of nationalities in order to break up the feudal principalities. Centralization, on which the national state rests, was as necessary to capitalism as it was detrimental to feudalism. Support of national struggles was looked upon favorably by Marx since the creation of national states facilitated the development of capitalism, which, was progressive economy when compared with feudalism. Consequently, Marx supported the Poles against the feudal Russian empire (Warsaw uprising of the 19th century); he supported the war for the liberation of Italy from the Austro-Hungarian empire. As late as 1870 he even declared for the support of Germany in the war against France since a German victory, in his opinion, would do away with the division of Germany into principalities and allow for the best development of capitalism which in turn would prepare the economic and political conditions for the proletarian revolution. It was necessary to foster the development of the capitalist national states in order to allow the proletariat (smothered at that time) to be heard from as a class. It must always be borne in mind that the era in which Marx supported nationalist wars of liberation was one of wars against feudalism by a rising capitalist class which as yet had a progressive task to perform. Marx, to be sure, did not base his support of the Polish, Italian and German national struggles on any sentimental, liberal criterion which states that all nationalities fighting for independence must be supported. Instead, Marx viewed the question from the class angle; from the perspective of how best to unfold the proletarian struggle. In those days, when the question of destroying feudalism was on the order of the day, support of the rising capitalist national movements was the only way by which to advance the interests of the proletariat.

Lenin, the disciple of Marx that he was, looked upon the national question through the same field glasses. In an article on "Rights of Nations to Self-Determination" (vol. 4 of Selected Works), he writes:

"There is no doubt that the greater part of Asia, the most populous part of the world, consists of either colonies of the Great Powers or of states which are extremely dependent and oppressed as nations. But does this commonly known circumstance in any way shake the undoubted fact that in Asia itself the conditions for the most complete development of commodity production, for the freest, widest and most rapid growth of capitalism have been created only in Japan, i.e., only an independent national state... But it remains undisputed that capitalism, having awakened Asia, has called forth national movements everywhere in Asia too, that the tendency of these movements is towards the creation of national states in Asia, that the best conditions for the development of capitalism are secured precisely by such states."

Here Lenin, without any sentimentalist garbage, looks at the question from a cold historical view, which is that national movements and struggles, having as their task the "most complete development of commodity production", are on the order of the day in Asia and in other backward territories. By emphasizing that the development of capitalism is on the order of the day, Lenin consequently rejected any idea of proletarian revolution for these backward areas. His support of national movements, it should be observed, is based first and foremost on the idea that capitalism still had a progressive role to perform in these backward areas. Lenin's error, when viewed in retrospect, is

understandable, since before him did not lie a whole chain of proletarian revolutions crushed by these "oppressed" native bourgeoisies, as, for example, Chiang Kai Shek's suppression of the 1927 revolution. Lenin did not live to see the culminating process of the Turkish national movement which developed finally into a brutal military dictatorship of the worst sort. Lenin did not live to see the "oppressed" Mexican state go in for state capitalism in such a big way as to surpass the advanced countries in bourgeois trickery, in its demagogic methods of making the proletariat an arm of the capitalist state. Instead, what unfolded before Lenin's eyes were a Sun Yat Sen and other oppressed national leaders whom he compared with the "great preachers and public men of the 18th century in France." In short, Lenin did not see the abrupt and progressive development of capitalism. He failed to see that capitalism, having become reactionary in the major countries of the world, had become reactionary even in the darkest parts of Africa. Concretely he failed to see that the completion of the bourgeois democratic revolution had become merged with the proletarian revolution and that it was the opening up of the possibility of the proletarian seizure of power that had so terrified the native bourgeoisie as to eradicate, once and for all, any progressiveness which it may have possessed.

Here is another example of Lenin's failure to analyze correctly the role of capitalism in the backward countries. In an article entitled "Democracy and Narodism in China", Lenin writes:

"The Western bourgeoisie has decayed and is already being confronted by its grave diggers, the proletariat. But in Asia there still exists a bourgeoisie capable of representing sincere, militant, consistent democracy, a worthy companion of the great preachers and great public men of the end of the 18th century in France."

Whatever may be said of Lenin's position, it is clear that he was only trying to apply Marxist thoughts, Marxist methods of approach to the national question. If his conclusions were proven wrong, it was not because he tried to revise Marxism, but, on the contrary, because he tried to apply it to a situation where his judgment of the objective conditions of capitalism was based on conditions existing no longer, namely the "progressiveness" of capitalism in backward areas. It is therefore quite correct to attribute Lenin's error on the national and colonial questions to short-sightedness, to repeat, to a failure to see the end of capitalist progressiveness internationally in backward countries as well as in advanced ones. Lenin, in 1917, only four years after writing the above quoted language, changed his position as to Russia, by declaring that the events had already interlocked the democratic with the proletarian revolution in Russia.

What, however, is to be said of individuals like Trotsky and other false "leftists" who shout from the housetops that Chinese capitalism is decayed, that the proletarian revolution is historically not only possible there but the only thing which will get China out of its rut, but who, in spite of all this, insists on supporting the war on the part of the butcher of the proletariat, Chiang Kai Shek? These people, it must be concluded, are not blind, not shortsighted; they just don't give a damn about the proletarian revolution.

Review the writings of Trotsky and his ilk on the Chinese war and you will find the most jingoistic, patriotic expressions, the most derisive terminology used to attack the Mexican comrades who have split from him because of his social-patriotism. In attacking these comrades who said that "the only salvation of the workers and peasants of China is to struggle independently against the two armies, against the Chinese army in the same manner as against the Japanese army", Trotsky labeled them "real traitors or complete imbeciles."

Let us see who the real traitors are. Which position is treacherous to the interests of the Chinese proletariat: the one which urges the proletariat to cease giving its blood for the interests of native capitalism, for the military

dictatorship of Chiang Kai Shek, or the position of Trotsky which says that in this slaughter "our comrades should be the best fighters"? (From Trotsky's article, concerning the Chinese-Japanese War, dated Oct. 27, 1937 and reprinted in the Dec. 1937 Internal Bulletin of the Trotskyists.)

Notice with what jingoistic fervor Trotsky fabricates fairy tales in order to speed up the slaughter of millions of workers and peasants. He says: "Politically the (the Trotskyists- K.M.) should criticize Chiang Kai Shek not for making war but for making it in an ineffective manner, without high taxation of the bourgeois class, without sufficient arming of workers and peasants." (Ibid.)

Does this not resemble in all respects the role of his Majesty's opposition which dedicates itself not to attacking the present imperialist war on the part of the British ruling classes, but to criticism in Parliament of the inefficient methods used by Chamberlain in prosecuting the war against Germany? Trotskyists will protest that this comparison is a vulgar approach which does not distinguish between a "colony" and an imperialist country. We nevertheless persist in asking: Of what value is this scholastic differentiation to the Chinese worker who feels the heel of oppression by his native capitalist? The Chinese worker sees Chiang Kai Shek straining the resources of the country, straining every nerve to win the war, naturally by putting the burden upon the backs of the workers and peasants, and in comes Trotsky and interjects ironically that the Chiang Kai Shek government is prosecuting the war ineffectively. Can there be greater treachery than that?

Lenin, in describing the accomplishments of genuine wars for national liberation, remarked:

"At the bottom of the genuinely national wars, particularly such as took place between 1789 and 1871, there was the long process of mass national movements, of struggle against absolutism and feudalism, of overthrowing national oppression and creating states on a national basis as prerequisites for capitalist development." (Resolution of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party Abroad, Selected Works, Vol. V, p. 132.)

That was years ago, as Lenin correctly remarks. Is there any intelligent human being today who would prescribe these above words for the present Chinese war? Of course, if you will, Messieurs false leftists. Either you say that China's war is regressive because Chinese capitalism needs development in which case your treachery goes under the cloak of Marxism, but is treachery nevertheless because based on falsehood; or you abandon any pretense of Marxism and completely pass over to the side of the democratic-imperialist gentry whose war slogan "for the independence of China" you have adopted.

AGRARIAN THESIS PRESENTED TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE PARTY FOR
DISCUSSION
(Battaglia Comunista)

The end of the second world war was accompanied by the outbreak of important rural movements involving especially that vast and impoverished stratum of workers, the sharecropping metayers, occurring principally in the traditional centers of such struggles, Apulia, Basilicata, Sicily. These movements had neither the bearing nor the range of those which marked the other post-war period, and, like the movement of the industrial workers, did not succeed in merging into unified campaigns, national in character. Nevertheless they are a noteworthy symptom of the distress of the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians and spotlight the conditions which compose Italian agrarian economy after five years of disorganization of markets and ruination of all the productive resources of the country.

If some rural classes have been able to enjoy an artificial bounty during the course of the war and participate in the speculation feasts of the black market (not at all different from what happened in the other world war), succeeding in some cases in paying up their mortgage indebtedness and climbing up the rungs of the social ladder which go from the petty lease-holder or sharecropper to the level of small and medium private property, - the real facts have demonstrated, and will prove more and more, that the relative prosperity of these very strata was founded on quicksand. Almost everywhere, particularly in those regions most sensitive to upsets in rural economics, the small-scale farm property appears to us fearfully deprived of provisions as well as manpower, its heritage of stock-animals reduced, its orchard culture seriously damaged, its entire outfit, implements, seed, etc., next to impossible to renew or repair, its houses and barns even more ruined. Even more harshly than in the First World War, the rural classes have been submitted to the monopolistic, rapacious intervention of the State, and have watched helplessly the carnage of the belligerents. Here some managed to accumulate some capital out of speculation, they have been unable to use it to acquire indispensable industrial products, either because of the extreme scarcity of these products or because of the monopoly prices tagged on them in the market. Thus has the war brought about a real degradation of Italian agriculture, while the impotence of legislation and the connivance of the State allow the city bourgeoisie to engage in the most unrestricted speculation in real estate.

The farm laborers, on the other hand, have seen the prices of industrial products rise feverishly while their earnings remained almost unchanged; nor were the meagre profits, which the clandestine commerce in farm merchandise might have offered even to them, enough to make up the difference between the remuneration of their labor and the cost of living which had already swollen terrifically under fascism.

Out of the convergence of these conditions, acting upon rural strata, socially different but united to an extent by physical suffering and the economic load of the war, were born the upheavals mentioned above and which led, as in 1919-20, to occupations of estates, riots, burning and devastation of municipalities, clashes with the public power of the Democratic State and, not seldom, slaughter.

These phenomena indicate a profound state of unrest and serve as introduction to vaster social convulsions. Still, they reveal a lack of cohesion, a deficiency in leadership which have root in the absence of a class Party able to orient the revolt of great rural strata towards their natural political objective. On the one hand, the rural organizations, which were violently destroyed by fascism after the First World War, were revived under State tutelage after the Second World War with the authoritarian leadership of the so-called Parties of the Masses (really Parties of the Government). On the other hand, the degeneration of the Socialist and Centrist (Stalinist) Parties and the influence of these parties, together with the Christian Democrats, have retarded the crystallization process of rural movements around the party of the proletariat.

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So it has come about that: either the outbreaks are resolved by the interference of the union organizations, by "peaceful bargaining" with the farmers, or the State intervenes with the benediction of the "workers' representatives" in the government, all for the defense of sacrosanct landed property and not less sacred ground-rent; or the rural movements exhaust themselves in anarchic upheavals or let themselves be maneuvered about by the well-trained forces of landlord reaction. The political process unfolding before us, parallel to symptoms of a quick reopening of the agricultural crisis, gradually restores vigor to the traditional conservative-farmer element which many proletarians believed had been given the coup de grace by the "national restoration", and gives special urgency to the development and deepening of our Party's penetration into the countryside, already begun here and there.

The general criteria which must inform our "agrarian policy" are summarized in the theses appended herewith:

RURAL ECONOMY AND THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

1.) The first elementary fact from which Marxist criticism proceeds in facing the agrarian question is this: that the premises for socialization do not exist in rural economy while they already mature in the industrial field. Beside the large capitalistically organized farm enterprise (characterized by a high division and specialization of associated labor, by large employment of capital and a high level of technical progress), there predominates in fact in the rural districts that petty farm property usually based on family economy, - whether it takes the legal form of a lesse-hold, or sharecropping metayer, or small private tillage, or what is only different in appearance from the extensive latifundia, the division into a large number of small productive units masked by juridical unity of possession.

2.) But Marxist criticism, while it foresees the immediate socialization of the large agricultural-industrial estates only, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, also affirms that the technical development of the other and vaster sector of rural economy and the liberation of the productive forces employed in it are not possible except by the violent rupture of traditional property relations and the destruction of bourgeois power. In fact, it is this preliminary condition of the abolition of ground-rent which burdens the colonist or the leaseholder, of debts which suffocate the small cultivator, - finally, of all the forms of exploitation to which the small rural productive unit is subject in the regime of market-production, just as it is the necessary premise for the general amelioration of the rural scene where private capital is not accustomed to involve itself in its search for investments that are more lucrative and more rapidly turned over...

The Party of the proletariat opposes historical consistency to pretenses of a "revolutionary peasantry" supposedly called to work out the freedom of small rural property within the capitalist system of society. The Party holds firmly to that fundamental concept of Marxism which assigns a preeminent, dominant role in the conduct of the revolution to the working class. But it does not, for that reason, assume the anti-Marxist thesis that rural economy can be immediately transformed in a socialist sense. It foresees, in its concept of a victorious working-class revolution, the new power expropriating the owners of large rural estates of the capitalist type without indemnity and transforming these estates into large-scale collective enterprises. At the same time, the proletarian revolution will unfetter small farm properties from the exploitation of landed proprietors and bourgeois and will assign to the direct cultivator (as manager, not owner) the land which he works at present, free of the old shackles of rent, church-law, mortgage debts, etc., on the condition, of course, of his not employing any one else's labor.

3.) We conceive of such a solution, however, only as a passage-bridge to the eventual absorption of the whole rural economy into the system of collective production. For such a realization, the dictatorship of the proletariat will rely on legislative subtleties (such as producers' partnerships, cooperatives, etc.) than on the victorious affirmation of socialist revolution on an international scale, on the expansive force of socialist economy itself, on the pressures that socialized agriculture and industry will exert on those sectors in a transitional phase, and on the general progress of productive powers and technical instruments which will come with the consolidation of collectivist production.

The Party of the proletariat, therefore, condemns those slogans and programs for immediate or eventual accomplishment of "the land to the peasants" or "the small enterprise (or, worse, the small property) in place of the large" because they are anti-historical and counter-revolutionary. Behind a demagogic vesture, they tend to invert the historical tendency of an ever more complex interweaving and coordination of production. The Party, in like manner, condemns the thesis dear to the old social-democratic opportunist, according to which we must await the passage of the small rural enterprise into the large enterprise and the consequent improvement of productive techniques in agriculture before we can proceed to the revolutionary conquest of power. We maintain that this process of absorbing the small enterprise into the large and raising the technical level in agriculture will be realized, although in a gradual form, under the rule of the proletariat only.

THE PEASANTS AND THE PARTY OF THE PROLETARIAT

4.) The considerations dealt with above show that the special circumstances in the evolution of rural economy not only do not negate the proletarian revolution, but will be able to assure us the support of the peasant masses who are interested in the revolution as the only force to break the iron chains of their exploitation by the merged and indissolubly linked forces of the bourgeoisie, landed, financial and industrial; and, above all, the State which assumes the defense of capitalist class rule. Not only must the poor peasant see in the triumph of the working class the guarantee of his freedom from the oppressive system in which he now lives, but that very triumph presupposes the active agreement of peasant forces in the violent demolition of the bourgeois State by the industrial wage-workers.

5.) But this reciprocal relation, so evident and indisputable to critical theory, reveals itself as infinitely more complex in real life. The particular structure of rural economy determines a corresponding variety of social layers, and, as a reflex, a peculiar line-up of the rural strata in politics with regard to communist revolution.

While the hired laborer of the large capitalistic estate is without more ado assimilable to the wage-workers of large-scale industry and enters therefore into active politics in the typical forms of the revolutionary class, it is clear that the same cannot be said of the other strata which move in the orbit of rural economy. The colonist, the sharecropper, the leaseholder, are indeed among the exploited of capital, but with this difference from the industrial worker: they are not totally expropriated of their product and possess, at least, a part of the tools and machinery necessary to the functioning of their enterprise. Therefore, whenever it is a question of small lease-holders and sharecroppers, we can definitely class them as semi-proletarians. The small proprietor, in his turn, may be related to the worker by the miserable environment of his life and, in some cases, has reason to envy the rural semi-proletarian. He differs from the others by remaining the owner of the fruit of his toil and, as such, has interests in the general movement of revolt among the rural population only as a result of the bonds

of dependence on the privileged classes, his taxes and indebtedness.

It is clear that the mentality and political physiognomy of these strata correspond exactly to the particular type of production-form in which they operate (the small, hereditary enterprise, isolated and in competition with all others), so that to their anti-bourgeois rebellion there does not and cannot correspond a proletarian class-consciousness. (The sharecropper, in particular, because of the distinct technical structure of the metayer enterprise, is usually a conservative element; likewise the average owner-cultivator and the petty prosperous peasant). The proletariat can expect support from the agrarian semi-proletariat (colonists, leaseholders, sharecroppers) in moments of profound social breakdown to the degree that they see in the revolutionary workers the one force able to suppress immediately the rule of landlord exploitation and private appropriation of land, - the rule, in other words, of ground-rent. The small owner-cultivator, in his life of poverty and indirect exploitation in some parts of Italy, can be pressed under certain conditions onto the track of the proletarian fight for power; but its support, even more than that of the rural semi-proletarians, is always to be considered as temporary and fluctuating, able to turn brusquely into its opposite. To the formula of Lenin: "the alliance of proletariat and poor peasants", we find preferable that of "the support of the working-class by the poor peasants."

6.) It follows that the Party's recruitment of rural forces is admissible only in the case of the agricultural proletariat, for those of its representatives who have matured the consciousness of their own position in the capitalist systems of society. In Italy, especially in certain regions, the day-laborer has a long, consistent, glorious tradition of class struggle; and, - for all that the agricultural workers do not have the benefits of concentration on large city nuclei, more direct part in political conflict, like the industrial workers, and the consequent thicker maturation of a revolutionary world-outlook, - the Party that expresses the general interests of the proletariat will not meet excessive difficulties in recruiting them, nor must it undergo, as a result of their enlistment, any damaging perturbations.

As for the possibility of winning decisive influence over the rural semi-proletariat and the small owner-cultivators, that is dependent on the general line of development of the situation which can bring them close to the working class movement or detach them from it in the sudden currents of ebb and flow of that very movement. The thesis that conditions the support of the poor peasant to the proletarian revolution on the adoption of a tactic favoring their aspirations at some particular moment or which plays on their immediate reactions - such a tactic is to be rejected in the most categorical manner. While it never achieves the aim of binding these strata firmly to the workers, it provokes a profound adulteration of the goals of the proletarian class Party, a crumbling of the Party's political and organizational framework.

In the same way, we exclude most peremptorily every tactic of contracts, agreements, united fronts with eventual Peasant Parties. Even if such parties can, under definite conditions, carry on activity parallel to that of the workers' Party, they nevertheless imprison it in a general political outlook and a tactic which is petty-bourgeois to the core and hostile to the goal of communist revolution and, therefore, also to the final interests of the strata they pretend to represent.

The winning (always understood in the sense defined above) of the rural semi-proletariat to the Revolution can take place only on the terrain of struggle for their demands in a time of opening generalized social conflicts. Never on the

basis of political agreements with regroupments of peasant basis or tactical manœuvres operated during a phase of revolutionary ebb-tide, in the hope of winning or maintaining posts of advantage in the arena of political rivalries.

The Party will not neglect the occasion to develop an intense activity of diffusion of its final program in the rural districts, making its lever always the agricultural wage-workers who are the direct components - with the industrial proletariat - of the future workers' state. The Party will try to spread among the rural semi-proletariat the consciousness that liberation from their present burdens is only possible by the work of the socialist revolution.

FIGHTS FOR ECONOMIC DEMANDS AND UNION MEMBERSHIP OF THE PEASANTS

7.) While taking into account (in line with the Party's general trade-union policy) the rapid transformation of the mass organizations and their ever more obvious investiture in the State apparatus, the Party does not propose to create or suggest new organizations in antithesis to the existing ones. The Party encourages the proletarians and semi-proletarians of the countryside to enter their respective unions, there to defend their own class interests against the owning class and the State.

On the other hand, it will be the constant objective of the Party to bring the peasant struggle for economic demands onto the political terrain, to show these very struggles remain sterile outside of the frontal fight of the workingclass against the capitalist State.

8.) It is obvious that the intervention of the Party in the movement and union organizations of the rural population will have as its object, above all, the vast strata of hired laborers and seasonal workers, who have suffered most from fascism and the war. This category, enlisted in autonomous unions of the National Federation of Land Labor, necessarily fights for economic demands such as wage-increases, reduction in working hours, general improvement of working and living conditions (a problem felt most acutely in some areas of Italy), and the objective of the Party will be to organize the sum total of these struggles into a general program, avoiding the dispersal and fragmentation of the struggle. Moreover, while it will be able to support the recurrent attempts to seize the lands of the aristocracy by day-laborers who are not employed on capitalistically organized estates and to turn them into cooperatives, the Party will always try to organize these movements into a unified political system and show how such a solution must prove ephemeral under the capitalist system and truly presupposes the destruction of the bourgeois State to effect its purpose. The Party will not incur the fault of encouraging the occupation and division of those great capitalistically organized estates which are economically indivisible units, to be turned into large-scale model collective enterprises under the rule of the proletariat.

As regards the agricultural semi-proletariat, organized into separate organizations of those who work partly for others, partly on their own farms and seasonally employed farmers, the social conflicts of the present time turn mainly around the questions, for the first group, of better settlers' contracts and the reduction of that part of the product to be handed over to the landlord, and, for the second, of the reduction of rent-demands as well as the easing of the tax burden which bears heavily on both categories. The Party will intervene in such conflicts with the constant preoccupation: (a) to bring them onto the vaster field of political action, showing those involved how none of the proposed solutions are conceivable as real and enduring outside of the working-class revolution for political power and the inauguration of the proletarian dictatorship, (b) to prevent these movements led by groups of sharecroppers and tenant farmers for better

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contractual relations with landed property from growing independently of the economic struggles of their wage-workers or in opposition to them (as happened in the late campaign of the National Federation of Land Labor for revision of sharecropping contracts).

As for the small owner-cultivator, today he has interest partly in common with the preceding category and, above all, general defensive interests against the oppression exerted by the bourgeoisie of town and country in the form of state assessments, heavy loans, monopolistic price-rises of industrial products, etc. He also, like the colonist and metayer, aspires to annex the lands of the aristocracy to complement the usually miserable lot he now possesses. The Party will bear in mind these political considerations developed above, in regard to any tactic to be used in facing this peasant category. It will take into account the possibility that a part of these petty cultivators, having taken advantage of the high illegal prices of farm products during the war and won positions of relative power with respect to the other less fortunate categories, may represent in this new phase of opening social struggles rather an element of conservatism than one of support for the industrial and agrarian working-class in the fight against capitalist society.

FOR THE CONSTITUTION OF AN AGRARIAN SECTION OF THE P.C.I.

9.) The Party, while excluding any idea that they resist today the objective prerequisites for developing mass work in the rural areas and broadening our sphere of influence among the rural population, still holds it necessary to coordinate and discipline from now on, not only the work of communist groups in local and central unions of land workers, - but also the study of the problems which affect the agrarian economy and rural classes, in Italy and throughout the world.

For such a purpose, the National Convention proposes the constitution of an Agrarian Section, in direct union with the Central Committee, to which will be handed not only executive tasks in the sense of applying in practice and on a local scale the political and organizational directives sketched by the higher bodies of the Party, in harmony with the program fixed in the fundamental documents of the Left, but also tasks of study and counsel, looking to the integration of the most recent economic and political experiences with the more than twenty-year work of political clarification fulfilled in this field also by the Communist left.

Accordingly, the Agrarian Section, as just proposed, must be bound closely, not only with the Central Trade Union Committee, but with the Central Committee of the Party and through it to the C.E. The Agrarian Section must be composed, besides the members of these committees, of comrades particularly versed in agrarian questions, either because of practical experience or theoretical preparation and competence in economics.

In this phase of construction of the Party's framework in politics and organization, the Agrarian Section will have a direct contribution to make, both theoretically and practically, toward the solution of the problems posed by the latest developments in capitalist rule, and the elaboration of clear tactical directives in regard to the international struggle of the working-class and the reconstitution of its leading bodies, as well as the Italian political situation.